IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claim 1 and ADD claim 12 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A support fee setting method, comprising:

storing a user name and a grade for service in a one-to-one correspondence in a user information database in a user information registering section connected to a computer;

obtaining points derived from a job responding to an inquiry from a user from a job-to-point conversion table stored in an inquiry history registering section connected to the computer, wherein the job-to-point conversion table converts jobs to points such that a job responding to the content of an inquiry with ~~an~~ a computer support activity ~~of~~ by a support person requiring a higher technique is set to a higher point;

obtaining the grade of the user by referring to the user information database that has stored the user name and the grade for service for the user; and

setting a support fee based on the grade of the user, the points derived, and an actual cost for a responding activity to the inquiry from the user, wherein the points derived are converted to an amount according to the grade of the user by using a point conversion table, in which an amount is set for each grade such that the point derived is converted to a lower amount as the grade becomes higher, the point conversion table being stored in an evaluating section, and the support fee is computed as a total amount and a total of actual costs for the responding activity to the inquiry of the user.

2. (cancelled)

3. (previously presented) The support fee setting method according to claim 1, wherein:

the points derived and the actual cost are stored in a history information database stored in the inquiry history registering section in correspondence with the user name; and

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the points of the user and actual cost are obtained by referring to said history information database.

4. (cancelled)

5. (previously presented) The support fee setting method according to claim 1, wherein:

the total amount is a total of the amounts for a predetermined period;

a grade shifting value according to an aggregate of total amount is obtained by using a grade conversion table, in which an amount and a corresponding shift in grade are stored, the grade conversion table being stored in the evaluating section; and

the grade of the user in the user information database is updated based on the grade shifting value.

6. (cancelled)

7. (previously presented) The support fee setting method according to claim 3, wherein:

the total amount is a total of the amounts for a predetermined period;

a grade shifting value according to an aggregate of total amount is obtained by using a grade conversion table, in which an amount and a corresponding shift in grade are stored, the grade conversion table being stored in the evaluating section; and

the grade of the user in the user information database is updated based on the grade shifting value.

8-10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) A method in a data processing system for determining a fee to charge a user for using a service, comprising:

associating a point value with the service;

associating a point value with the user;

associating an amount-per-point value with the user;

increasing the user's point value by the service's point value when the user uses the service;

increasing the user's amount-per-point value responsive to an increase in the user's point value; and

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determining, in the data processing system, the fee based on the user's point value and the user's amount-per-point value.

12. (new) A method of operating a data processing system, comprising:

associating a point value to a product support service based on the cost of providing the product support service;

determining a number of points accumulated by a user during a time period;

associating a grade with the user according to the determined number of points; and

calculating a product support service cost based on the point value associated with the product support service and based on the grade associated with the user.